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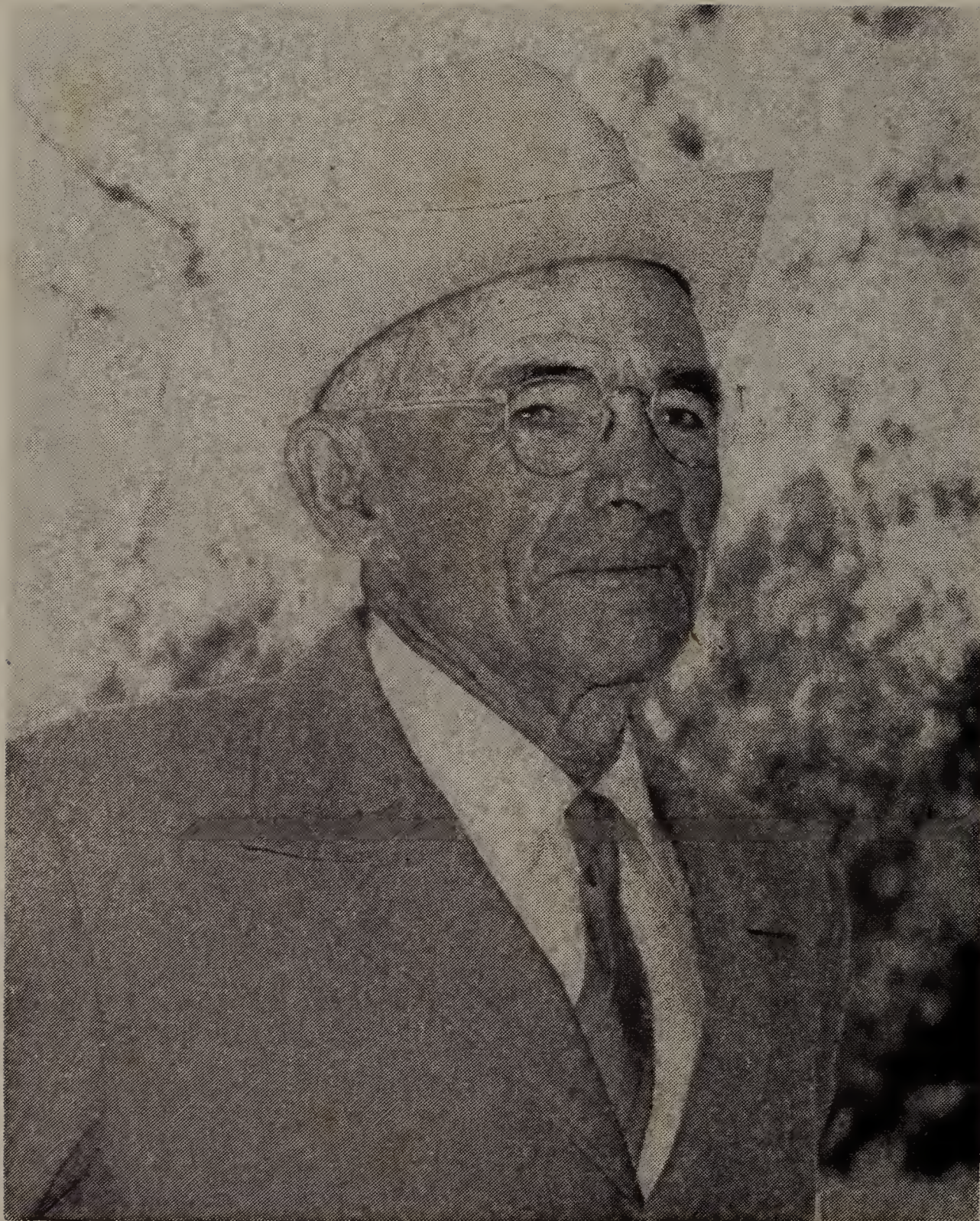
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Mrs. Ruth Payne
1963.

G. P. REAGAN
Country Doctor



ROCKY REAGAN

G. P. REAGAN

Country Doctor

by
ROCKY REAGAN



The Naylor Company
Book Publishers of the Southwest
San Antonio, Texas

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*To my wife, Annie Lee, who has
helped me and inspired me to
record this book.*

Foreword

A veteran outdoorsman, born, reared and still living and ranching in the same Texas cow country where his father and mother settled long before the War Between the States, Rocky Reagan knows the area about which his stories are told, better than most of his neighbors know their own bedrooms. As a teller of true Texas stories, Rocky Reagan stands up chin-high among the top yarn spinners of the West. His stories reflect no plotted, or dry, detail-laden fantasy, but rather his narratives reveal living, hair-raising episodes of Texas pioneers.

This story, *G. P. Reagan, Country Doctor*, is a chain of such episodes, surmounted by his father and mother, during the most rugged days in Texas history. Taken together, these episodes make a book of fascinating entertainment, not only for the descendants of this interesting family, but also for excitement seeking youth, history loving fathers and mothers, and senior citizens who indulge in reminiscence.

Much has been written about Texas, and the lives of early settlers, which will be preserved as history. This narration by Rocky Reagan, told in his unique cowboy style, will surely find a place in preserving the history of the area.

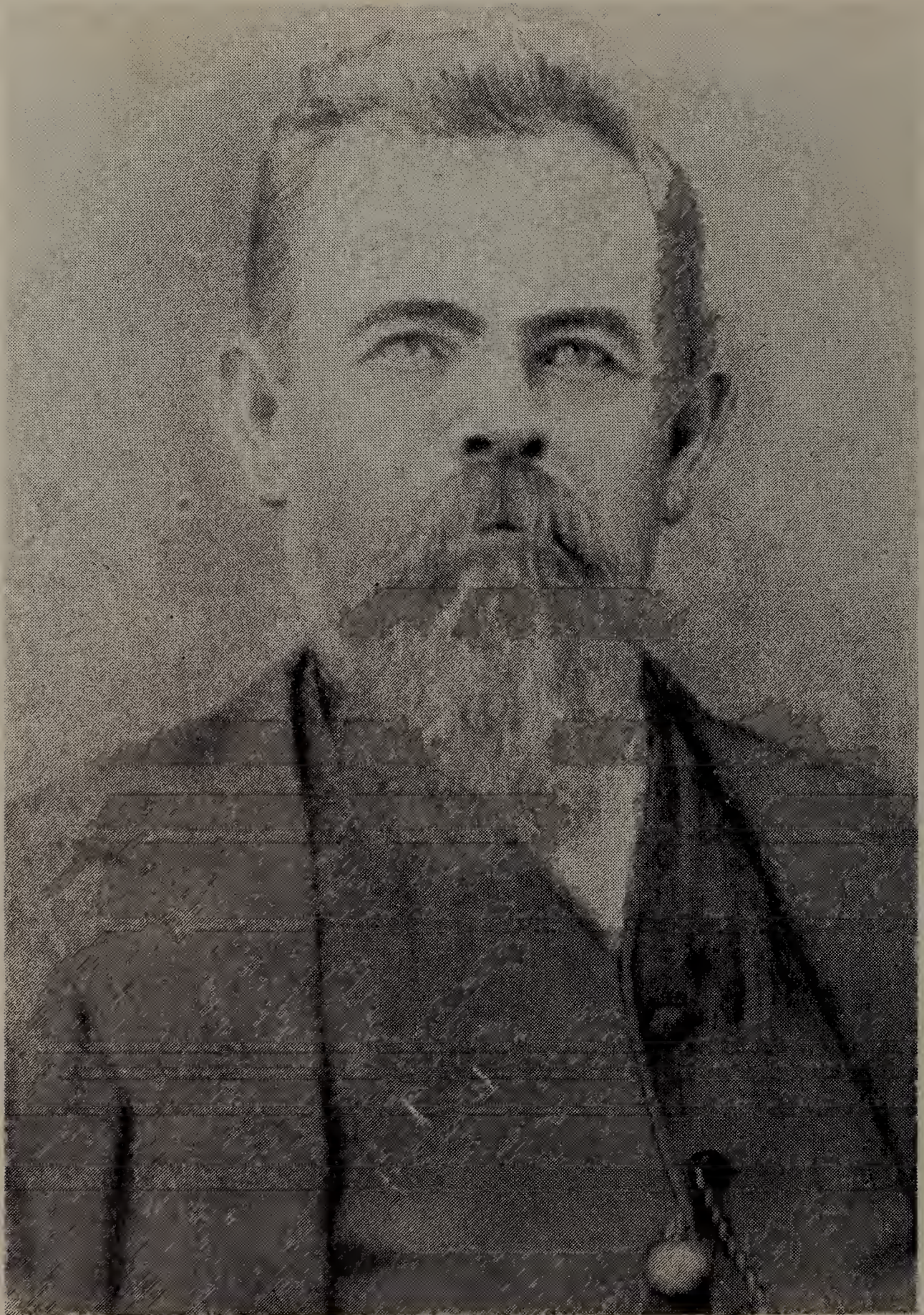
VAN CHANDLER, D.D.S.
Twice Poet Laureate of Texas
Past President, American Poetry
League
Past President, Border Poets

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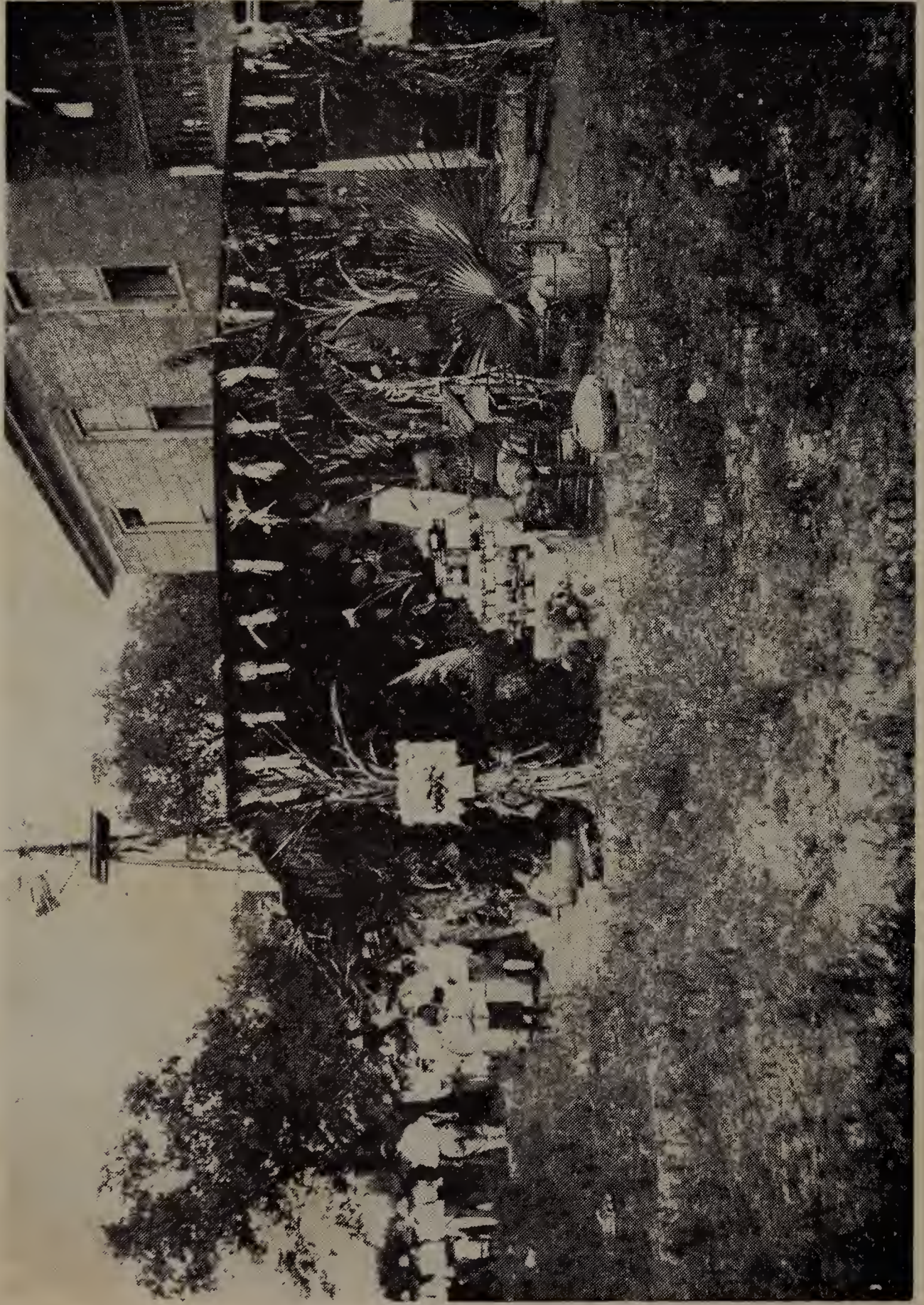
The G. P. Reagan home in Oakville



Dr. Green P. Reagan



Mrs. Alabama Harrison (Tip) Reagan



First Oakville Fair

The Doctor Goes West

THE ROAD WIDENED TO allow for a blacksmith shop with hitching rack along the front, a general mercantile store, with porch and boardwalk leading to the next, a butcher shop, a saloon and a barber shop. Across the road a second general store with a drug store railed off in the rear just about made up the business district of the town of Flatonia, Texas in the eighteen fifties and early sixties. Each place of business had its hitching rack. Town pump and water trough sat back from the road in a vacant lot. Probably two dozen residences were scattered on both sides of the road. The store with drugs also housed the post office. This briefly was Flatonia, Texas.

Dr. Calaway, the leading citizen, labored long into the night, relieving the sick, bringing new babies into the world — and at the same time boosting Texas — especially his home town. He realized he could not continue the work alone so he wrote Tulane University at New Orleans requesting a

young medical graduate who was willing to throw in with the frontier and be a partner in a going practice.

It's a long time since Green P. Reagan reached New Orleans and entered Tulane University in 1854, a young man from Mississippi, with his life's work cut out. We will not undertake to follow him through those four years. Needless to say he worked his way, and during the summer worked along the wharf and on boats plying the Mississippi River. The waterfront was rough and whoever survived it must needs be a pretty good man with his fists. G. P. was not quarrelsome, but he would not allow himself to be pushed around nor his integrity to be questioned. Long before the day for that sheepskin, G. P. had decided Texas would be his home. The day finally came. With trunk packed, Dr. G. P. Reagan took the first stage back home to make known his plans to his Father.

When he arrived home he notified his Father that he had accepted Dr. Calaway's offer to join him in some town called Flatonia, Texas. G. P.'s Mother had passed away several years earlier, his sister Mattie had married a Captain Rabb and moved to Texas only two years before. He would be a Texan too.

After a few days at home, Adam, an older brother, and G. P. with light wagon and a span of good mules headed for Texas, along with several families; some of their acquaintance and a couple of strange families who had drifted in and waited for company along the long, lonely journey. It was pretty hard to leave Dad and John, but they would follow as soon as the place could be sold.

Along the route Dr. G. P. had several occasions to use his medicines and seldom a day passed but some grandmother sought him out for advice. "Sassafras Tea" for fever — Richweed root boiled to purify the blood — rusty nails soaked in vinegar, a teaspoonful 3 times daily for added iron in the blood, these and many other remedies were always in use. One of the ladies had a severe headache — with a sharp lance several incisions were made in her temple, a small glass or suction cup was placed over the incisions until a certain amount of blood had been drawn. The headache relieved, the patient was required to remain quiet for a time. A baby

was delivered in one of the wagons — a roaring fire, plenty of hot water and cloths scorched over the fire to purify them — and all was well. The caravan rolled on.

Saturday noon, a week on the road and time for rest — along a wooded stream the men scattered in search of fresh meat. Squirrels were plentiful and with a few turkeys the whole camp had Sunday dinner and gave thanks. Needless to say many were the problems confronted by most of the pioneers. Days ran into weeks.

Finally at Flatonia the caravan began to disband. Many settled around Flatonia — not daring to move on without a doctor for their families, while others pushed on west. Dr. Calaway soon had his new assistant in harness, with room and board at \$8.00 per month and stable for his horse arranged and 10 bushels of corn put in the barn at 20c per bushel.

A New Partnership

DR. REAGAN WAS practicing medicine. Long trips in a strange country, town calls, Lagrippe and chills and fever, there raged an epidemic. Dr. Calaway, since he had an assistant, spent much of his time writing letters, boosting Texas and especially his adopted town Flatonia. New families had come, some stayed, some moved on. Dr. C continued his campaign. Patients were lost — 'twas natural, but many, many recovered.

Seasons had changed now. Several cowboys had their ponies tied along the street. An immigrant wagon pulled along side the blacksmith shop for tire shrinking. A middle aged doctor paced the board walk, looking anxiously west. A tired, sweaty horse stood with lowered head, sides thumping from a hard ride. The doctor looked at his watch, then called to the rider of the tired horse, "waiting for Reagan — we will get to your baby as quick as possible." Soon another rider rounded a bend in the road and headed for the store.

Reagan, a much younger man, medium build, straight, and well proportioned, pulled his saddle bags from across his saddle and greeted the other doctor. "Morning, Dr. Calaway, Bill J. has a new boy, was with them since two this morning." The two talked for a few minutes then both mounted and left in a gallop, headed east. They had come to the forks of the road, taken the dim trail that turned south across the prairie and gone a short distance, when Dr. C looked up, saw a dust cloud along the main road; "Look Reagan lets cut across, that might be my Arkansas friends coming — its about time." He was right. Down the road came two covered wagons, with stock being driven behind by three teenaged boys. The back wagon with four mules loaded heavily with household goods and supplies was driven by a Negro man and his wife. The Edwards family were welcomed by their old friend Dr. Calaway. After a brief welcome and directing the immigrants to a relative's farm near town the doctors galloped south, explaining an urgent call to see a sick child, and a promise to see them next day. As the doctors rode away, Dr. Calaway asked, "Reagan, how did you like my Arkansas friends?" "To tell you the truth Doctor, I didn't see them, that blackeyed devil in the back of the wagon was all I saw, I'm sure setting my cap for her, and if they try to move on, I'll have the whole family thrown in a detention camp and demand her as ransom."

The wagons rolled on, with the nearness of their destination came relief to Mother and Father. They both thought Dr. Calaway had held his age well and the young doctor quite young to be practicing medicine way out here. But it was fine for their old friend to have a young man to relieve him. Far from these thoughts were those of the three girls riding on a mattress in the back of the wagon; the younger, Fannie, clapped her hands and said, "Girls, that black horse the old doctor is riding is mine," Pattie agreed, if she could claim the roan the other one rode, 'twas different with Tip, "Girls, you can have all the horses in Texas, but I'm setting my cap for that young doctor." Truly this was love at first sight.

Next morning, Sunday, they would rest at the Burtons, and on Monday try and locate for themselves. Dr. Calaway

had said there was a small farm nearby for sale. Plans don't always work out. Late into the night the two families talked, extra beds were made and pallets were arranged for the boys, who had turned in early to dream of a new world. Next morning one of the girls was unable to leave her bed, — high fever. Dr. Calaway was sent for, but he was going on another call, "Reagan," he said, "you go out to Burtons, you might see that girl you've been raving about." "Suits me" — so in a sweeping gallop he left on this important call. When he arrived at the farmhouse and was shown into the sick room; who was the patient but that "blackeyed devil" from Arkansas. After a brief visit the Doctor rode back to town. By evening he felt he should again check on his patient. So from that Sunday morning visit, calls grew more frequent. By spring, Dr. G. P. Reagan led his bride, Alabama Harrison "Tip" Edwards, to the altar and here is established a home, and life which will live on for generations.

War Clouds

WAR CLOUDS were thickening. Immigrants came and went. A friend going back to Mississippi persuaded the Reagans that Helena, county seat of Karnes County, was a splendid opening for a doctor. It was only 75 miles, so the young couple with a hack and pair of mules started once more west. Always the faithful horse followed or was led behind the hack. It was only two days journey and a happy one — pioneers going to establish a home of their own. 'Twas not to last for long. War and a call to arms. After hurried preparations and goodbyes Dr. Reagan rode once more, this time to enlist in Green's Brigade 1861 at Oakville, Texas. For four years he saw his family seldom. I say family, a daughter had come to bless their home a few months after the Doctor had enlisted. He had been permitted to go home for the arrival, and at the same time try to interest new recruits.

The hardships and hunger, long hours in the saddle or at the side of some sick or wounded soldier were only a

challenge; these men were fighting for what they thought was right. At home, the women fared little better in many cases; yet saw the lighter side of life, such as the old postmaster at Helena who each day drowned his feeling. He began by taking a quart of "corn" to the post office each morning. By the time the mail rider arrived around eleven a.m. our postmaster was pretty indifferent (to his patrons) but sorted the mail, and waited on the few who were anxiously awaiting word from some loved one. By this time it was noon. Our postmaster gathered all remaining mail, put it in his alpaca coat pocket and with his now almost empty bottle locked the post office, strode out to a large oak in the middle of the street where the shade was thickest and coiled himself for a long evenings nap — but not until the bottle was empty did he sleep. Late arrivals for the mail slipped the pack from the alpaca pocket, took what was theirs, placed the pack again where it was, and so it went until closing time when often there was little mail left to be locked up for the night. Our postmaster, much refreshed and walking reasonably straight, ambled home, to await another day.

Money had come, time and again. The Reagans were gradually getting ahead. Confederate money was kept locked in a trunk. As soon as the war was over there would be a home. We all know the answer. Hopes and dreams were dashed to pieces as the stark reality struck home. Only the pioneer spirit could have survived. Many men had fallen in battle, others died by the wayside. Malaria, yellow fever, smallpox, they all took their toll, but worst still were the carpetbaggers. Though starved into surrender, our people were not beaten. — But back to my story — Dr. Reagan came home on horseback, emaciated but with a heart full of hope and a prayer on his lips. A week later an ox-drawn wagon brought other soldiers. This wagon brought Dr. Reagan's surgical instruments he had used so often the past 4 years. They had to be smuggled and this kit represented his savings over the years.

Ranger Doctor

PRACTICE WAS GOOD but no pay — a chicken, pig, goat, or a little corn meal, enough to keep body and soul together. For six months this went on. Then in 1866 the family moved to Banquete where Capt. and Mrs. Rabb had large holdings. Mrs. Rabb was Dr. Reagan's sister Mattie. Now this country needed a doctor. Capt. John Rabb had a brother Capt. Tom, he with 20 men, was guarding the border from Brownsville, to Eagle Pass. Renegades from the Revolution, "Banditos," and Indians infested the entire border. After Capt. Tom Rabb had several of his men shot up pretty badly he realized the great need for a surgeon. Together with the help of his brother and Doctor Reagan's sister, Dr. Reagan was persuaded to enlist in the Ranger force. Once more, with two small children, the trek west. This time they were accompanied by several Rangers. Dr. Reagan drove a hack with Mrs. Reagan and the three children. A wagon carrying supplies and a few household goods followed, driven by old Juan the

remuda man. Camp was made each night on water or near it when possible, but a couple of wooden kegs carried on each side of the wagon made it possible to have water ever ready. After nine days the caravan finally reached their destination. It was the Apache Ranch, headquarters for the Rangers.

Two stone and plaster buildings, each almost touching the other at two corners were the only permanent structures. These sat on a high bluff overlooking the Rio Grande, some 25 miles northwest of Laredo. Tents were stretched further back, in a level plateau some 200 yards to the west; the saddled horses stood hitched to scrub mesquites. Further back, several men with guns strapped to their hips drifted out, unsaddled, brushed their horses' backs after slipping a morral of corn on their heads then fondly picked up their saddles, carried them to a nearby rack, turned once more to rub their ponys' backs while the last of the corn was eaten and the morral removed. An open fire burned near one of the tents, a wagon stood nearby, while old Andres the cook hurried to serve his evening meal.

Capt. Rabb had brought his bride and they took one house, while Mrs. Reagan soon had a home established once more in the other. Some time lapsed without incident, only an occasional horse thief caught, or goods being run from one side of the river to the other. Horses were well fed, as were the company. Game was plentiful, meat — fresh or dried — was steady diet. Camp was as usual. Each day saw scouts astir early. — Go — come to report. Everyone had reported in, save a couple and they were not due. Camp was quiet as were the two families housed on the hill.

Late one night, a "hello" shouted several times brought Dr. Reagan to the door, after a few moments he was back in the room dressing. He told Mrs. Reagan the visitor was the father of a very sick child across the river in Mexico. As he left he told her to tell Capt. Rabb he would be back as soon as he could but if he was needed to leave word and he would join them later. Mrs. Reagan knew the risk, swimming that river at midnight and to a foreign country, but was a woman of great faith. Morning came, the day wore on, it was evening when the two scouts galloped in. What they reported was important. Immediately camp was astir,

the old horse wrangler hurried out to bring in the mounts for the Rangers. Capt. Rabb galloped up to the house and said: "Mrs. Reagan tell the Doctor we have just gotten word there will be a lot of stock run across the river tonight at the Comanche crossing. Tell him to get to me as quick as possible. There is sure to be a fight." He wheeled, joined his men and was gone. Before night the Doctor came in, wet to above his waist, his old pony was tired and swam low he explained. After getting the Captain's message Dr. Reagan changed into dry clothing and ate a bite while a fresh horse was being saddled for him. With saddle bags across his saddle and a rifle in its scabbard, he reached down kissed his wife and was away, bound somewhere up river.

The household chores had to be carried on, and tomorrow being wash day, Andres brought water from the river. Wash pot and tubs were filled, the fire was laid ready to be lighted. He then went to round up his other horses for their evening feeding and tie them up for the night. The night was balmy, no clouds shown, a still settled over the land save for the howl of a lone coyote. That night was long, or so it seemed to Mrs. Reagan.

At dawn, with breakfast of tea and toast, she was ready for the wash tub. By now the bright fire crackled around the black wash pot. Mrs. R had begun rubbing out clothes over a tub when she heard her baby fretting. She hurried inside, picked up a quilt and with baby in the other arm was back at the wash. A smooth place was selected near the tub, quilt spread, and baby left to play with his spools and drink in the pure fresh air. Mrs. Reagan was again over her tub. She had only rubbed a few minutes when she had a premonition something awful was about to happen. Naturally she glanced to see if the baby was all right. Imagine her horror to see a gaunt Mexican stripped to his waist, a bandana around his head, coming over the bluff with machete drawn. As Mrs. Reagan wheeled to face him, he leaped toward the baby, and brought the big knife down with a quick stroke, as he did a huge rattler writhed in its own blood just beside the baby. It had just crawled on the quilt. The old man bowed low, "Madama, I'm sorry if I scared you, yesterday your husband saved my baby, now

today maybe God sent me to save his child." There was no doubt of this in the Mother's mind. She confessed it was nerve wracking thinking to see her child's head chopped open and death for them both.

The Rangers rode in late, with one man wounded. He had caught a bullet in his left shoulder, which the Doctor removed. Little was said of the fight, only that the outlaws scattered, and some 30 new horses grazed in the flats, these to be held for their owners.

To Banquete

THE DAY CAME when another baby joined his sisters and brother so Dr. R was determined for a better place to rear his family and not to subject his wife to further border incidents. Once more the family headed for Banquete and semi-civilization. Dr. R's practice grew. The home was a happy one, both Mother and Father were thankful not always to live in dread.

It seems that wash days were unlucky days. This time Mrs. R had to bring wash water from a dug well 200 yards from the house. With her two buckets she set out, leaving the children playing in the yard. She had finished hanging her clothes out, called the children from play to discover Charles, four years old, missing. Hurrying, calling everywhere was to no avail. He was lost. The Mother went to a Mexican shack nearby to spread the alarm — a boy raced off on an old pony to the store and headquarters, looking for Dr. R and to get help. In the late 1800's there were few peo-

ple and fewer roads. Fences were almost unknown. Riders came for miles around. A Mexican tracker trailed Charley almost to the well, there he had veered off the trail, picked up some snail shells, had sat and played for a time, then the trail was lost in the tall grass. All day, riders came and went. Evening came, and the Doctor, in from a long ride, changed horses, comforted his wife as best he could, mounted and rode into the night. The coffee pot was kept hot. A good fire in the wood stove and food on the table — each rider coming for a report was refreshed. Rattlesnakes, lobos, or mountain lions, let alone exposure were a few of the many things to be considered. The boy had only a light slip on.

All night men rode, while a dozen frontier women kept watch. Morning came, no sign. Towards noon, a man had picked up the track of a small barefooted boy in the sand near a deep water hole five miles from home. Wild cattle had spoiled the tracks. Dr. R called to the different Mexicans, "Five twenty-dollar gold pieces for the one who finds my boy." Just before sundown of the second day, an old Mexican they called "Lucky" saw the child running across the prairie. He soon overtook him, picked him up on his horse and started home. Asked what he was running for he said he had seen his Father gallop across that way and wanted to find him. It developed later he HAD seen him. Again that Faith had sustained the child's Mother. She asked Charley where he spent the night, he said he went to a water hole but was afraid to drink for fear he would fall in. 'Twas late and he was awful tired so he coiled up at the root of a big mesquite so no cattle would trample him. His older brother and sister looked on him as truly great, while his Mother held him in her arms. The Doctor paid the reward, thanked and bade goodbye to the wonderful friends who had rallied to help look for the child.

As the Doctor rode into the lot to unsaddle his horse a few evenings later, a familiar figure rode in behind him. — Who? He sat his horse like — Yes — it was Rocky Amons! They hadn't met since they were mustered out of the Army. Rocky was no stranger to Mrs. Reagan, as he had been in the Reagan home many times before. Now he had a house of his own, in a new country with many opportun-

ities. He was here for business. He had a little ranch on the Atascosa River in Live Oak County. Not a doctor for 50 to 100 miles in any direction — and new families moving in almost daily. The county site, Oakville, was named for the beautiful oak trees surrounding it. Mrs. Reagan was impressed, and before Mr. Amons left for his ranch the Reagan children were taught to call him Uncle Rocky. Three weeks later, plans were well under way for another move.

Frontier Home

WITH A NEW TWO-SEATED HACK and a good pair of mules the Reagans headed north, after a fond goodbye to the Rabbs and friends. Their household goods were loaded in a wagon which was driven by a Mexican boy, Pedro. Camp equipment was ever ready since there were few houses along the route. Game was everywhere. As the noon hour arrived, camp was made in the shade of a clump of hackberry trees. The teams hobbled to graze while coffee was being boiled. Mrs. R readied their lunch on a tablecloth spread on the grass. The children, as most children, were starved, and soon after Doctor gave thanks all mouths were filled. 'Twas a happy group bound for a new home in a new land.

(I failed to mention a horse carrying a saddle, which followed the hack. 'Twas Dr. R's new horse his sister had given him. Blaze — a bay, blaze-face, stocking-legged horse the Doctor had ridden in his practice for the past two years. He needed only to whistle and Blaze came in a gallop.)

After a brief rest the family moved on, mustang horses, grazing, threw their heads high, snorted and moved away. Deer and antelope dotted the prairie. Only along the creeks was there any timber. The first night out, Dr. R shot a wild gobbler. The following morning fried turkey breast, Dutch-oven bread, and gravy gave the children a good start for their longest day. They wanted to make it to Barlo Ferry. There they were ferried across the Nueces River and on the fourth day out, drove into the new county site, Oakville. Sulphur Creek, on which the town was located, was a clear, swift running stream. This truly was an ideal location for a town, for it was located in the bends of the creek about a mile upstream from its entrance into the Nueces River.

The Reagans were not long in getting established in their new home. Busy, active days followed their arrival. They rented a cottage north of the town square and set up housekeeping, Dr. Reagan had little time at home. Riders came for miles for medicines, or for the Doctor to come to some sick person, at times 50 miles away. He rode day and night, far and near, changing horses at times along the route. Mrs. Reagan was also kept busy, besides her own family she often had some sick child to help nurse or some young mother to attend.

Life in this frontier town was far from lonely. A courthouse, several frame store buildings around the square, a saloon, a livery barn and now a hotel. Oakville truly was a thriving frontier town, on the main road between Corpus Christi and San Antonio. Six and eight mule freight wagons rolled in, some with supplies for Oakville, others headed for Cotulla to the west, Corpus or San Antonio. The crack of a freighter's whip or of a rifle were common, day or night, too many differences were settled this way. Dr. Reagan was called on, often too late, to settle disputes. He took no sides in quarrels, but was outspoken, when it came to matters of right and wrong. We have no time to dwell on many details of every day life of this family, but they were part of a new county.

Time moves ever on — flowers blossomed around the Reagan home — a cedar tree flourished in the front yard — a church building stood just across the road not 100 yards

south of the home. A circuit preacher filled the pulpit the 2nd Sunday each month. This town as most others had its saloon and a basement where gamblers plied their skill. Doctor Reagan soon had a supply of drugs, which today would look more meager than that found in a roadside grocery. Ranchers rode in, tied their horses to hitching racks or one of the large oak trees that surrounded the courthouse square. A new settler from Tennessee arrived. He was quite a talker named Warner, who bought a 160 acre tract and started clearing. One morning he rushed in to tell Dr. R and others gathered around the store, that he had just killed the biggest rattlesnake he had ever seen. "Doctor," he said, "it was 7 feet long, had 32 rattles and 17 buttons." Of course the doctor told him he was lying and all began working the tenderfoot over. But let's not tarry here.

A Masonic Lodge was organized. As soon as a charter was granted from Grand Lodge, Dr. Reagan was made W-M. Men came for miles to meetings and spent the night with friends. A hotel did a thriving business — bed \$1.00 and 50 cents for meals. Dr. R bought a small tract of land, where stood a log cabin in an oak grove, to this he moved his family — $\frac{3}{4}$ miles north, northeast of the courthouse.

Frontier Incidents

ON ONE OCCASION, after the usual growing pains of a new town, courthouse, jail, hotel, several frame store buildings, drifters, immigrants, fortune hunters and would-be cowboys came and went, a Negro man rode a freight wagon in, looking for work. Dr. Reagan, as always, sorry for him, fed him and told him he could clean his yard and feed his two saddle horses for his board until he could land a job. So 'twas agreed and the Doctor sent his man to his work. He was very efficient, but ever watching the road, only one day did he stay on the job. Early next day a Deputy U. S. Marshal picked him up, wanted for murder, locked him in jail, and waited to catch another located in the same county. Two days later, Dr. R left early on horseback to see a sick lady on San Miguel Creek some 30 miles west. This day was dreary and misting rain. The Doctor had employed an old Irishman to build a chimney and fireplace. He had begun to work and hauled his rock, sawed out the opening in the logs for the

fireplace, but had gone off on a binge for two weeks. Mrs. Reagan had tacked together and covered a screen to close this opening in their room. As she busied herself that evening with her children and sewing, she glanced out the south window to see this same burly Negro crouching across a little clearing. He was moving rapidly, then crouching, watching. He squatted low, whistled quietly, moved a way then repeated his low whistling. He was headed for the horse shed. Mrs. Reagan barred the door and windows. He was now sitting on an old wagon, watching first the house, then the road. Night was closing in fast, Mrs. Reagan readied food for her children, put them to bed by dark, ever keeping her vigil with shotgun ready. As dark settled she continued hearing that plaintive whistle, but less often. With door barred and windows securely fastened she felt more safe, save for the large opening in the wall which the screen covered. This she reinforced by rolling a trundle bed against it. With gun across her lap she sat in her little rocker facing the opening. The night was long, but never did she think of rest. Her husband was out somewhere, and must be warned not to go to the horse shed, and too, that opening had to be guarded. Hours passed, Mrs. R sat drooping in her chair; suddenly a crash, a gust of cold air, the screen lay across the trundle bed. As Mrs. R jumped to her feet at the same time trying to level her gun, a great paw on each shoulder unbalanced her, shoved her back into the chair, a tongue licking her face. She suddenly realized it was the Doctor's dog which had been accustomed to coming into the house through this opening. The dog was happy to know his Master was near and came ahead to bring the good news. By the time Mrs. R was again on her feet she heard the rhythm of hoofbeats nearby and knew it was time to warn the Doctor. He unsaddled outside; turned old Blaze loose without feed, knowing should he need him again before day, all he had to do was to whistle. Tired and sleepy the two had dismissed the apparent danger and rested for another day. The following morning, officers arrived in search of the escaped prisoner. From signs left by him, he had expected to steal one of the Doc's horses, and make his getaway, too, he evidently had contacted his accomplice and they were to meet at the

log cabin in the oaks. It was learned a week later he had been killed along the Karnes County line by a Marshal who undertook to arrest him.

That incident was closed — but hardly forgotten when the Doctor was away on one of his long rides. Nearing the long shadows of evening, as he approached a short cut in the road he heard shots ahead down the main ranch road. Thinking it a rider coming to hurry him to the bedside of his patient, he headed straight on — for a short distance he spurred ahead, then after second thought, the cutoff would save several miles, and he knew the trail well, so he cut the short route, riding hard. After another hour he reached the home of his patient, she was no worse and no one had been sent to meet him. The Doctor spent the night at the ranch. Soon after day next morning, a rider galloped up to the front gate, hurried in to report his neighbor's entire family had been killed by Indians the evening before and their home burned. 'Twas then the mystery of the shots of the evening before was known. Dr. R had been riding straight into an Indian raid. By noon his patient was improved and he rode once again for Oakville and home.

While he was away, Mrs. Swearingen and one of her children had drowned in a pool in Sulphur Creek near town. Saturday, before full moon and Lodge night found Rocky Amons and several others gathered to confer the Masters Degree on C. B. Ferrell. The town was growing. The Druries, the Wallers, Hintons, Armstrongs, James, Andersons, also J. V. Ellis, R. D. Cude, William "Uncle Billie" Adams, R. Tullos, James Ussery, S. S. Mapes and many others.

At Christmas there was always a public tree in the courthouse, a program, fireworks, and to climax the event, a dance. A few badmen had naturally located in Oakville. It was easy picking for the gamblers until they began quarreling among themselves. Spring came with its balmy days and cool nights, wild flowers in abundance blossomed to perfume the countryside. The month of May and with it warmer nights and a full moon.

Mrs. Reagan had just called Severo, the 16 year old boy who cared for the Doctor's horses to bring her an armful of wood that she might start supper, when a rider galloped up,

handed her a note and hurried away, he was excited and his mount blown. She watched him for a full minute, wondering. The note was from the County Judge — it read: "Mrs. Reagan bring your babies to the courthouse at once. About everybody is in. Rider hurrying to get all to safety. Scout reports Indians to raid Oakville *tonight*. We can protect everybody here. Hurry."

Mrs. Reagan continued her cooking. Soon another rider galloped up. "Mrs. Reagan, the Judge says for you to come on in right away. It's too dangerous for you out here." Mrs. R said, "Tell the Judge I'm staying here. My husband is out on a call and I'll be here to warn him when he gets home." Soon the Judge himself came for her, but to no avail. He said, "This raid is going to be bad and every available man is well armed." Soon the Judge gave up. "We are all right Judge. Thanks a lot, I have no fear." As night settled, Severo was called to his supper, then told what the report was. He put a quilt over one arm and a three year old in the other, while Mrs. R picked up the baby and a shotgun, with two children following, they slipped away from the house a few hundred yards, into a small clearing where the quilt was spread on the ground and the children put to sleep. Severo was warned, should anything happen and he make a sound he would be the first one to die. "No, Mrs. R, I'd die myself for you and these babies" — and she knew he meant it. With Severo off the pallet, Mrs. R took up her all night's vigil, seated at the heads of her babies. But Severo was soon stretched on the ground, sleeping the sleep of the young. While Mrs. R was ever alert, once she saw a skulking shadow creeping toward them. She leveled her gun and waited. Soon it moved closer and lay flat. Mrs. R was ready, with gun cocked she waited. Then it rose, trotted across the clearing where she could see it was only a lobo wolf on the prowl. She settled back, relaxed, when a lone shot rang out up town, then another and all H___ broke loose. For 20 minutes the battle raged. Then all was quiet. No fire, 'twas strange she thought. Soon the morning star shone in the east; other stars began fading as streaks of dawn began breaking on the eastern horizon. Night noises ceased as the songbirds took over. Another day and thanks to the

"Master" all was well with them. Mrs. R gathered her brood and soon had coffee boiling, intending to send Severo to town to get a report. A rider came to say the shooting was due to a trigger happy sentinel who had shot at a shadow and every other armed man joined in the fight, shooting imaginary Indians and Mexicans. Dr. R reached home later in the day to report the Gussetville store had been robbed and burned the night before.

The Commissioners Court found their records badly jumbled and after trying for two days to straighten them out without success, it was proposed by Rocky Amons to burn the D— things, buy a set of new books and start all over. It was voted unanimously by the court and accordingly just outside the courthouse a bonfire was made of certain records. For this reason little is known of the early proceedings of the courts of Live Oak County.

The new livery barn with its many horse stalls on either side and its wide hallway was a very popular place in summer; it was always cool of evenings after the dirt had been wet down. A domino game was usually going near the front. Four rawhide bottom chairs furnished the seats while a big wooden feed box laid flat sufficed for a table. The calendar of the late 1870's as of today was ever changing.

The Growing Family

THE DOCTOR AND MRS. REAGAN had quite a family; Lucy, the oldest, had been through many hardships with her parents; May, the second, passed away while quite young. Next came Eugene to bless the home; Charley; Mamie, the sunshine of the place; Pattie, the serious one; Lawley, the youngest for eight years. They grew and waxed strong under the watchful eye of a wonderful Mother who believed in God and His teaching, "Bring up a child in the way he should go," also a devout, praying Father. They were a normal set of children, for instance, an old circuit rider often spent the night at Dr. Reagan's. Before retiring all the children were rounded in for Family Prayers. The old gentleman prayed and prayed and kept them on their knees so long that one by one they crawled out of the room, finally when the prayer was over, only the Doctor, Mrs. Reagan and the preacher were left. Mrs. Reagan, humiliated at the children's rudeness started to correct them, when Eugene asked, "Mother, do you

know you snored about the time we began leaving?" Another time a Revival Meeting was going on in Oakville. Mrs. Reagan had invited the three preachers and the singer out for supper. It was Saturday night, and a wonderful meal awaited them. Just before night the Doctor rode up with his lifelong friend Rocky Amons. Now Rocky was a good man but noted for his profanity. Mrs. Reagan greeted them at the back gate and explained to Rocky that the preachers were there for supper and to please be careful of his language. "Sure Tip, I don't have to cuss, and I'll sure watch out, got a lot of respect for preachers." Everyone exchanged greetings. Supper was announced and all were seated. The Blessing was said after which Dr. Reagan began serving plates. Rocky was left till last. When a generous helping of cabbage was set before him it was too much, with a string of oaths he painted the air for a brief second, slapped his hand over his mouth, then turned to Mrs. Reagan — "Tip, your husband did that on purpose, he knows D— well I hate cabbage." It was soon laughed off and all were relaxed — even Rocky, who accented his remarks about the food as being good.

The old Reagan home originally consisted of two rooms with hallway between and a long porch facing south, with a large spreading oak in the side yard. Later two other smaller rooms were added, one on either side of the hall. A dining room and pantry were built as an east extension. To the back rooms was a doorway leading into the pantry and from there to the dining room, where a large fireplace was built in the east end of the room. A porch on the south of the dining room afforded passage to the front living room — or Dr. and Mrs. Reagan's bedroom. Here another huge fireplace brightened the place and afforded the family meeting place on winter evenings around a rousing log fire. Wood was always stacked high on the side porch. On the east end of the porch was a washbench, with washpan, soaprack and roller towel. Where did they cook, you ask? Built adjoining the dining room just north was the kitchen, 12 by 16 feet with a door on either end and one leading into the dining room with one step up. In the "L" just west of the kitchen was a large underground cistern, always with cold

fresh rain water. As years passed a new post office was built in Oakville and Dr. Reagan bought and moved the old one to the home place, placed it in the northwest side yard, for the boys' room, it was always known as the "Office." In later years the Office was torn down, and the lumber used in remodeling the main house. Today the board with the slot through which letters were mailed in the old post office is in the kitchen of the present Reagan homestead. For 100 years this lumber has withstood the elements and today seems good for a long time to come. Could these old walls talk they could tell of many happy evenings, of pillow fights, of songs, games, and laughter — of sickness, of sorrow — of the time Mrs. R shot the flying hawk, before an angry bunch of Mexican grubbers — of their getting out of her yard and back to work. She was too good with a rifle for them to argue with or dare molest — yet a gentler soul never lived. They could tell of the trail herd that was put together just north of the house and trailed to Kansas. They had heard of the young stranger in Oakville whom the toughs ordered out of town. He went to bed as usual in a rented room off the porch of the home of a substantial family; an hour past midnight he heard hoofbeats coming his way. He hurriedly formed a body of his two pillows with cover over them then crawled on the top headboard. Soon bullets shattered the window and riddled the pillows. After some 50 shots had been fired our man crawled back in bed for a night's rest tho' the lead was rather bothersome. Next morning he saddled his horse and with Winchester across his saddle rode up to the crowd and told them how "brave" they were. He was leaving, not because of fear, but because he did not have a chance.

With the passing of time, many changes have taken place. Oakville has grown, Dr. Reagan is now a land owner having purchased 1,000 acres along the east bank of Sulphur Creek and lying a half mile east of Oakville. T. I. Gilmore, the county surveyor, needed a place so Doctor R sold him 160 acres for a home. The Doctor built his home in a large oak grove one mile from town. Here Pattie, Lawley, and eight years later Leroy A. (Rocky) were born. Many were the even-

ings that the family gathered around the big fireplace to go over the problems of the day.

Times were good, times were bad, it took the real pioneer spirit to survive. Mrs. R's health was broken. Her oldest daughter made her rest and day after day the grim reaper seemed to reach out to take her. The household dared not hope, but one evening the doctor announced that they were taking a trip — it was all arranged and Mrs. R had consented to try and make it. They, with Mamie as nurse, and Lawley, made up the party to travel in the hack. A Negro man, John Jones with his wife Ellen were to drive the spring wagon with cooking utensils, camp outfit and bedding. Uncle John was a splendid camp man while his wife was a first-class cook. Plans developed rapidly. Just three days after the first discussion of a camp trip they were off. A bed in the back of the hack would not be too inviting today for an invalid, but that is just what Mrs. R was thankful for. She was very weak and only eight miles were made the first day. By morning of the second day she showed signs of improvement. With the Doctor's treatment and a boost by the great out-of-doors she was gaining strength daily. The trip carried them to the doctor's brother who lived in Del Rio. Three weeks were spent in the great out-of-doors, and by the time the Frio River was reached on the return trip, Mrs. R was able to take a long walk. The balance of the family had remained at home to care for stock, a nice orchard and small farm. In order for Dr. Reagan to make this trip he had arranged for another doctor to take his place for a month. He was ready to leave when the Reagans reached home. "Too wild for me," he said.

End of the Trail

DR. R's PRACTICE GREW HEAVIER each passing month. Another doctor had come to Oakville, a Dr. C. L. Orr. He and Doctor R soon formed a partnership. Charley Bryer was the genial postmaster, Mrs. Van Meeter and her three sons were often with the Reagans. The Doctor, on one of his hard cases, worked over a Mexican woman all night to save her and her infant. The following morning he could hardly straighten his back. This proved to be the beginning of the end of a great career. Old Dock, the Doctor's faithful roan saddle horse was set free. Doctor R had to do his practice in a buggy. Now his health was failing. "Bright's Disease" and then no known cure. Yet he kept going. His son Charley was following in his footsteps — another Dr. Reagan.

The end came peacefully but left a great void in all the homes for miles around. Doctor R, who probably had had as many experiences and close calls as any man of his day, was unafraid, a man who knew himself, loved his fellowman, a good provider, yet one who never asked a patient for pay.

Those paid who were able; those who were not were treated just the same. Once while Doctor R was still practicing on horseback, a Mexican came with a note, "Doctor come to the K ranch, baby sick, Pete has to get some things in town." The Doctor left in a gallop for a seven miles ride. The Mexican, Pete, never reached the ranch. On the way back to town the Doctor learned Pete had been waylaid and murdered, his gun broken over a log. It was said that his murderers came to Oakville and reported finding his body. It was never proven who did the shooting. A few nights after the Doctor passed away Old Dock came up very sick. The boys did everything they could for him. He walked from home to the old bluff and back all night, towards day he lay down for the last time. Today his grave is on the south bank of Sulphur Creek at the "bluff."

Epilogue

CAPTAIN RABB having passed away, his widow remarried, a Rev. C. M. Rogers. He persuaded her to sell her holding in Nueces County and move to Austin. Mrs. R and Mamie visited her occasionally, Mamie having spent one summer there. With Charley in Medical School and Pattie away preparing to be a teacher at Huntsville, Eugene had early become the breadwinner. He bought horses from Oakville to Carlsbad, N. M. and shipped them to the southern states — Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia and Alabama. He drove many herds east, thru DeWitt, Lavaca and Victoria Counties. Beeville was the nearest loading place on the railroad. He never knew what it was to tire. Long hours and worry brought about a halt. He found employment in S. L. Miller's Shoe Store in Beeville. One of the amusing incidents happening there — he was easily chafed or galded. One hot afternoon several society ladies came in and asked for a certain shoe.

Eugene invited them to please step this way. He took the lead to the back of the store, walking straddle legged and stooped. It got to be a standing joke. One of the ladies told her husband, "I'd hate to have to walk the way Mr. Eugene told us to."

Dr. Charley came back from Tulane to practice and found Eugene on the Old Grover Ranch which he owned, unable to speak clearly. He had a light stroke and a bad back. The *dread* disease had taken hold of him also. He was spared to do more wonderful things for his family and others than anyone I have ever known. Never marrying, he had taken over the family, educated three brothers and two sisters, cared for his Mother, fed and clothed them until they were able to earn for themselves. The home was held together, and knit more closely. 'Tis true, "You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will, but the scent of the roses will linger round it still."

Pattie, whose life span was all too short, finished college with honors, taught in several schools, was County School Superintendent of Bee County and a leader in civic affairs. She too, in apparent health, was stricken and passed on. The Brown family from DeWitt County had moved to Oakville with two wonderful daughters. Dr. Charles won one, Susie, and carried her to the altar early. A few years later Lawley convinced Evie 'he' was the only one for her. Truly the two unions meant much. Eugene was spared to see his youngest brother Rocky married to Eula Cleveland, a cousin of the John W. Flournoys. This too, was a happy union. After it seemed so few years, God called her to a more beautiful field. Mamie carried on, having dedicated her life to her loved ones. We failed to mention at the proper place, Lucy Reagan was married to a young attorney, Frank Church and to brighten this union a daughter was born, Lucy Reagan Church. Two years later her mother passed to her reward and Lucy came up to know no other mother than Mrs. Reagan. Then there was May Reagan who passed on in infancy. We have tried to give a sketch of the lives of Dr. and Mrs. Green P. Reagan and have drifted a little deep but the subject is near and dear to the writer and he cherishes

each memory and many others too numerous to mention. I am giving a few dates as a footnote. We trust that some of you younger ones may read between the lines and know The Master's Hand guided all the way, and to Him we give thanks.

The Green P. Reagan Family

Dr. Green Pryor Reagan

born: June 7, 1835 — Tennessee

died: January 28, 1893 — Oakville, Texas

Alabama Harrison (Tip) Edwards Reagan

born: November 16, 1841 — Hope, Arkansas

died: May 31, 1913 — Oakville, Texas

Lucy Morton Church

born: March 30, 1861 — Helena, Texas

died: August 12, 1885 — Oakville, Texas

Alice Mae Reagan

born: July 14, 1863 — Fayette County, Texas

died: July 5, 1865 — Banquete, Texas

Eugene Garrod Reagan

born: June 5, 1866 — Fayette County, Texas

died: March 2, 1909 — Oakville, Texas

Charles Haskins Reagan

born: February 2, 1869 — Fayette County, Texas

died: June 17, 1932 — Beeville, Texas

Mary Bell Reagan

born: October 29, 1870 — Oakville, Texas

died: May 31, 1959 — Beeville, Texas

Martha Louise (Pattie) Reagan

born: February 11, 1873 — Oakville, Texas

died: January 27, 1922 — Beeville, Texas

Lawley French Reagan

born: May 6, 1876 — Oakville, Texas

died: May 28, 1956 — Oakville, Texas

Leroy Amons (Rocky) Reagan

born: August 7, 1883 — Oakville, Texas





DONALD M. VERA

